"granting pension as third retiral benefit"; and

(d) if so, which trade unions are supporting the scheme and which are opposing it and what is the final reaction/decision of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI G. VENKAT SWAMY): (a) and (b) The new Pension Scheme for EPF subscribers has already been notified for implementation w.e.f. 16.11.1995. As such there is no proposal to withdraw the Scheme.

(c) and (d) Except CITU, all the Central Trade Union Organisations like INTUC, AITUC, BMS, HMS etc. have generally supported the new Pension scheme with some suggestions for improvement. The suggestions made by the Central Trade Unions would be examined by the Government with a view to finding out if it would be possible to make any improvement in the scheme without affecting its economic sustainability. The CITU has demanded pension as a third benefit. As pension and PF are considered to be mutually exclusive, it is not possible to give pension as a third benefit.

Setback to Export of Wheat and Rice

*220. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that efforts to export wheat and rice from the country have received severe setback because these commodities could not be transported to the ports for timely shipment;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government have worked out the losses suffered by the country in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what remedial action Government have taken or propose to take to ensure the timely export of wheat and rice from the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (e) There has been no setback in the export of wheat and rice during the period April—August of the current year. Exports of rice have been 14.56 lakh MTs as compared with 2.35 lakh MTs during the same period last year. The manifold quantitative increase has strained the infrastrsucture. Delays have occured at certain times due to congestion at Kandla Port and transportation problems. These have been resolved by recourse to other ports on the West and East Coasts including minor ports such as Kakinada and resort to road movement to supplement the rail rake capacity. It is proposed to export upto about 3 million MTs of rice during the year and the progress so far has been in proportion. Exports of wheat so far have been 0.24 lakh MTs compared with 0.28 lakh MTs during the same period last year. Losses are so far not foreseen on account of shortfall in exports. Constant attention is paid to resolving the infrastructural bottlenecks to relieve impediments and ensure timely export of wheat and rice from the country.

MOUs signed between South African Forums and India

1297. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any MOUs have been signed between the South African Forums and India; and

(b) if so, the details of Joint Ventures, equity stake and fields/areas in which the two countries have agreed to cooperate?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Details of MOU signed between the different Indian Chambers

and their counterparts in South Africa to foster economic ties and promote cooperation between the business communities of the two countries are given in the enclosed statement.

Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), which organised a business meeting with the business delegation from South Africa on 20th Nov. 1995 has intimated that detailed discussions on promotion of Indo-South African Economic Cooperation were held and some of the Indian firms are reported to have entered into collaborations with South African firms for establishing Joint Venture Projects in South Africa in areas such as computer software, cement clinkers, trading and ceramic glassware etc.

Information on the collaborations/ MOUs entered into-by private parties on a one-to-one basis is not maintained. However, approvals of Foreign Direct Investment from South Africa in 1994 & 1995 upto 30.9.1995 totalled Rs. 16.03 crores.

Statement

Detail regarding MOU signed between the different Indian chambers and their counterpart in South Africa

I. *CONFEDERATION OF INDIAN INDUSTRY (CII)*

Memorandum of Understanding with South Africa Chambers of Business (SACOB) in Dec., 1994.

II. *FEDERATION OF INDIAN EXPORT ORGANISATIONS (FIEO)*

Memorandum of Understanding with South African Foreign Trade Organisation (SAFTO) in Feb., 1993.

III. *PHD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY*

(a) MOU with Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce and Industry;

(b) MOU with Durban Regional Chamber of Business;

IV. *FEDERATION OF INDIAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY (FICCI)*

(a) Cooperation Agreement with South African Chamber of Business (SACOB) in May, 1933;

(b) During the visit of the Deputy Foreign Minister of South Africa to India in Nov., 1994, three MOUs were signed between South African institutions and BISNET of FICCI, FICCI Quality Forum and Punjab Agro Corpn.

Advance warning of heavy rains for coal mines

1298. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Regional Meteorological Centre at Patna issued warnings of heavy rains during 26th/27th September, 1995 including the warning issued through express telegrams, to the General Manager of the Major Collieries in Bihar;

(b) if so, the precautionary action taken by the Collieries, particularly by M/s. Bharat Coking Coal Ltd. (BCCL) to prevent any disaster;

(c) under what circumstances the BCCL ignored the warning and continued with the operations, including in the second shift in the underground mines of Gaslitand on 26th September, 1995; and

(d) the action taken by Government against the BCCL for such gross violation of procedure to prevent mine-disasters?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) As per information received from Coal India Limited (CIL), no warning of heavy rains during 26th/27th September, 1995 by Regional Meteorological Centre at Patna was received either at Headquarters or at any of the areas of Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL).

(b) to (d) Do not arise.